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passing beauty was unqualified. The general impression seemed to be, that they would unquestionably carry off the highest honors that Jury can award, despite of the brilliant and powerful competition with which they will have to contend. The Jury consists of the following gentlemen:

General Mellinet, Ambroise Thomas, George Kastner, Fétis, Schiedmayer, piano manufacturer, Professor E. Hanslick, Lord Gerald Fitzgerald, and the Hon. Seymour Egerton.

A new scale Grand piano, made by Wm. Knabe & Co., of Baltimore, who may be justly termed the Chickering of the West, although not on exhibition, is justly exciting the warmest admiration in artistic circles. It is at the private house of its owner, who feels a natural pride in affording to the dilettante of Paris an opportunity to examine this splendid specimen of American pianoforte manufacture.

The first public expression of opinion, as to the surpassing merits of the Chickering pianos in Paris, we clip from that renowned musical authority, *La France Musicale*, April 14, 1867, edited by M. Marie Escudier. It is headed—

LES PIANOS CHICKERING.—Nous aurions voulu rendre compte aujourd'hui du concert donné mercredi à l'Athénée, et dans lequel le meilleur de nos pianistes, Théodore Ritter, a joué sur un piano américain destiné à l'Exposition universelle, un concerto de Mendelssohn, le rondo de Weber, et le *Braconnier*; de sa composition. Malheureusement l'espace nous manque pour faire, comme nous le voudrions, une étude complète de l'instrument sur lequel il s'est fait entendre. Comme ce magnifique instrument a été pour une bonne part dans le succès de l'éminent virtuose, il mérite un examen particulier. Aujourd'hui, nous nous bornerons à constater que l'immense renommée dont jouissent en Amérique les pianos fabriqués par Chickering et fils, à Boston, nous a paru complètement justifiée, et nous partageons, sans réserve, l'opinion du célèbre pianiste Gottschalk, formulée en ces termes:

"Le mérite qui distingue ces admirables pianos est un signe évident de progrès artistique. Rien au monde n'égale leur capacité 'de chant,' ni la rondeur harmonieuse du son. L'homogénéité est parfaite d'un bout du clavier à l'autre et dans tous les octaves. Les notes élevées sont remarquables par leur clarté et leur pureté qu'on ne retrouve dans aucun autre instrument, tandis que la basse se distingue par sa puissance, sans être dure, et par la magnificence de sa sonorité."

M. E.

(Translation.)

We should very much like to render an account of the concert given on Wednesday at l'Athénée, in which the best of our pianists, Theodore Ritter, played on an American piano, destined for the Universal Exposition, a concerto by Mendelssohn, the Rondo of Weber, and *Le Braconnier*, of his own composition. Unfortunately the want of space prevents us from giving a complete study of the instrument upon which he performed, but as the magnificent instrument contributed great-

ly to the success of the eminent virtuoso, it merits especial examination. To-day we must be satisfied by stating that the immense renown enjoyed by the American pianos made by Chickering & Sons of Boston, appeared to us entirely justified, and we share, *without reserve*, the opinion of the celebrated pianist Gottschalk, expressed in the following terms:

"The merit which distinguishes these admirable pianos, is an evident sign of artistic progress. Nothing in the world can equal their 'singing' capacity (de chant) nor the harmonious roundness of their tone. There is a perfect homogeneity throughout all the registers. The upper notes are remarkable for a clearness and purity, which I do not find in any other instrument, while the bass is distinguished for power without harshness, and for a magnificent sonority.

M. E.

### OUR LEADING ART SCHOOL.

We think it is apparent to the meanest understanding that professes to know anything, even such as know only the word picture, that upon the corner of Fourth avenue and Twenty-third street, of this city, is an institution called "The Academy of Design." Why it is called the Academy of Design we are at a loss to comprehend, save only because it has continual designs on the public purse, and is conducted by designing men. The word "Academy," as far as we know the signification of it, means a school, or place of tuition, and certainly the close corporation of 23d street is none of this.

From time immemorial the Academy of Design has professed to keep an art school. This attempt is divided into two parts, the first being the Antique School, where the new pupil is supposed to be taught to draw from the model or statue, and receive elementary instruction in art, and the second, the Life School, where he learns to draw the living figure, and advances to all the higher grades of art study. With the last we shall have little to do; it is the school of the advanced artist, and its shortcomings can be better overlooked than the first, which is the introduction of the student to his future profession, and badly managed, is calculated to crush out whatever talent or enthusiasm he may bring to his work.

At the Twenty-third street establishment, which holds up its head and clamors loudly for precedent beyond all the art schools of America, about fifty pupils are entered for study in the Antique School. These pupils are tied to certain rules and regulations, enacted by somebody, which say that they must come at a certain hour, and go at a certain hour, and do certain things, under strong and fearful penalties, of which expulsion is prominent. Like the handle of a jug, these precious regulations are all on one side, and not a word is said about rules that shall govern *any one*

but the pupils. We were about to say masters, but recollecting in good time that no such individuals exist, we halted. Out of these fifty scholars, about fifteen or twenty put in a daily appearance, posting themselves in solemn silence at their labor, and free to follow the bent of their own fancy, draw away for six mortal hours, at the end of which time, no matter at how critical a period of their work, they must drop crayons and go forth. During this six hours no teacher approaches them, no Huntingdon, Leutze or Durand drops in to give them golden encouragement in a few words of advice or instruction, and not even a salaried officer of the so-called Academy of Design deigns to honor them with his countenance and knowledge of art. We believe we are speaking strictly the truth when we say that through this entire winter the pupils of the Academy, such as have not thrown up their crayons in disgust and gone to other and more genial places, have labored on in dreary, half-warmed rooms, without a word of tuition, a symptom of a lecture, or any of the mental or physical comforts that should emanate from this rich institution to encourage the young and struggling artist in his career. And yet this is called an *Art School*!

If this shortcoming arose from the poverty of the institution we would be one of the first to take the hat and beg for its relief; but it does not. It arises from criminal selfishness and neglect. Upon the rolls of the Academy are scores of names, each of which should should blush to display itself openly in print, knowing what we have here recorded. They should blush for their own sake, and for the sake of art, when an occasional hour of their time could do so much for its advancement. While they are clamoring to the national Legislature for protection from foreign talent, they are allowing native effort to die of very hunger. We have nothing to say of the salaried officers of the institution—they are fossils and nothing is expected of them; but for the Academicians we again declare that their neglect of the art school is personally and jointly a disgrace to them.

MARRIAGE OF AN ARTIST.—We have much pleasure in announcing the marriage of Signor Severo L. Strini to Miss Rosalind Merriam, of West Newton, Mass. The ceremony took place at West Newton, on Tuesday, April 30, at one o'clock, P. M., the Rev. Dr. Huntington, of Boston, officiating. The bride belongs to one of the oldest and best families of New England, and the festal occasion was signalized by the presence of over two hundred of the *élite* of Boston society. We have known the happy bridegroom for very many years, and our association has taught us that he is as true and kindly a gentleman as he is truly an artist. We can only add our warmest wishes to those of their hosts of friends, for

the permanent happiness and prosperity of bride and bridegroom, and may they live to enjoy both a thousand years.

**MADAME VARIAN HOFFMAN'S CONCERT TOUR.**—This charming and talented lady and artist will commence an extended concert tour on the 13th of the current month, commencing at Norwalk, and from thence to Danbury, Waterbury, New Britain, Middletown, Poughkeepsie, Newburg, Hudson, Pittsfield, Northampton, New London, &c., &c. She will be accompanied by Signor Strini, Mr. I. B. Poznanski, and Mr. Edward Hoffman. We have no doubt that the fair artist will meet with a pronounced success, as she is a popular artist throughout the route.

**MR. EDWARD HOFFMAN.**—We are glad to learn that Mr. Edward Hoffman has accepted the position of Organist at one of our leading churches. Mr. Hoffman is a thorough and competent musician, a clever composer, and an accomplished organist and pianist. We are glad to see gentlemen of such standing presiding over the musical services of our churches, as the fact gives us an assurance that a marked improvement in the whole tone of that department of public worship will be the necessary result.

#### MATTERS THEATRIC.

For some reason, best known to the management of the Olympic, "Treasure Trove" was not produced at that establishment on Monday evening, Mr. Edmund Falconer being substituted in its place. Mr. Falconer was the manager of a London theatre and is the author of numerous plays of a sensational order. In addition to which Mr. Falconer is an Irishman. This may account for the innumerable shamrocks printed around the borders of the Olympic posters, and the brisk trade in peanuts driven around the Olympic doors.

The gentleman made his first appearance in "A Noble Revenge," and "The O'Flaherty's." The first is a somewhat prosy melodrama, the second an exceedingly funny farce. Both pieces showed evident signs of hasty preparation on the first night; the actors not knowing their parts, and the scene-shifters being equally deficient in the knowledge of their business, running on interiors when they should be forests, forests when they should be interiors, and, in many instances, "closing up" the scene before its conclusion. With all these to contend against, the gentleman still succeeded in making a rather favorable impression upon the audience, being vociferously called for at the end of the first piece, and forced to make a speech.

For all this, Mr. Falconer is by no means a great actor; he possesses a fair sense of the humorous, but his execution is altogether too prosy and labored to be in the slightest degree satisfactory, while when he rises to tragedy or sentiment (to perpetrate a bull) he descends to

rant. As an average sensational actor, then, he may be accorded praise, but, as a great or thoroughly artistic actor, none. In "A Noble Revenge" he shows to particular disadvantage, his rich Irish brogue sounding strangely incongruous from the lips of Julian di Vivaldi, a nobly born Italian. So far as my limited knowledge of the Italian people goes they are not given to brogue, but probably, out of honor to the shamrocks around the Olympic posters, Julian became an Irish Italian. If this is the case, and it tends to the greater honor of the "green above the red," nothing farther can of course be said.

In "The O'Flaherty's" Mr. Falconer's talents shine much more brightly; here brogue is admissible and necessary, and the gentleman succeeds in eliciting much honest laughter and applause by his personation of the rollicking Irish adventurer.

Aside from Mr. Falconer, both plays are cast as badly as they possibly can be; Miss Newton being but just acceptable as the Princess Olympia, while Mrs. Farren as the Duchess is, if possible, more stagey and unnatural than in days gone by. Of the other characters it is but charity to say nothing.

I promised last week to speak in detail of the "Flying Scud" in the present number, but, after witnessing a second performance of it, the play appears to be so utterly futile that it would almost be a waste of powder to direct a single critical shot at its fragile construction.

Mr. Bourcicault's star appears to be upon the wane, his ingenuity exhausted, and in the place of those really startling and original incidents and situations, which characterized his early works, we now have threadbare plots, incidents and situations vamped up or bouily taken from other plays. The great scene in the present play, the Derby Day, for instance, was presented in London some eighteen years since with exactly the same effects, paper horses, real horses, Derby day characters and all.

"Flying Scud" is of the turf, turly; all the characters talk slang, and, with few exceptions, are the most consummate scoundrels. The atmosphere of the stable and the gambling saloon pervades every scene, and, although the Jockey Dance may be piquant and the Derby Day exciting, Wallack's is not the stage upon which they should be represented.

SHUGGE.

#### MUSICAL REMINISCENCES OF WILLIAM GARDINER.

This well known writer, author of Gardiner's Music of Nature, has left many pleasant reminiscences of a musical character, relating to artists and art places. A few extracts will show his pleasant style, and his acuteness of observation.

"When a boy (says the author) I was present at the first performance of Handel's Oratorio of "Jeptha," in my native town of Leicester, in the year 1774; probably, the first grand music meeting that ever took place in the country. I heard Giardini play on the violin, and Rubinelli sing. Ever since I have looked forward to the pleasure of visiting Italy, "the land of song," from whence these refined musicians came.

"In September last I was invited by a lady and gentleman, distinguished artists, to join them in a tour through the country. Such was my curiosity, though in my seventy-seventh year, that I accepted the polite offer with alacrity and ardor. With such superior advantages I have made a delightful tour, and have returned in health and spirits to recount to my friends the sights I have witnessed.

"Of all delights which I expected, none promised me more pleasure than a complete feast in music—a proper revel, in which, for once, as an amateur in the art, I should have my fill. But in this I have been disappointed—dreadfully so, and perhaps the mortification I constantly felt, has led me to speak of their music in stronger terms of disapprobation than I ought. However, everything else was new to me, and I was delighted.

"The comments throughout illustrate this text, and the national music of Italy, 1346, seems to have grievously disappointed the auditor of Girardini and Rubinelli, in 1774—only seventy-two years ago.

#### MADAME CATALANI

"We called upon Madame Catalani, who leaves her palazzo on the side of the mountains in the winter months, to reside with her son, Valabreque, in Florence. She presently made her appearance with that vivacity and captivating manner which so much delighted us in England. After a short conversation with Madame C——, I spoke to her in English, coupling my name with Mrs. Lorraine Smith of Leicestershire, at whose house I spent a week with her thirty-six years ago. The incident directly flashes across her mind, and with obvious pleasure she began to recount the honors paid her on that occasion, especially a banquet at Mr. Pochin's of Barkby. She retains her English, and was pleased to talk to me in my own language. I observed that it was forty years since I first heard her at the Opera, in London. She instantly replied, 'Thirty nine. I was in Portugal in 1807, and though the war was raging I ventured to make my way to England through France. When at Paris I was denied a passport, However, I got introduced to Talleyrand, and, by the aid of a handful of gold, I was put into a government boat, and ordered to lie down to avoid being shot; and, wonderful to relate, I got over in safety, with my little boy seven months old."

"Great suspicion was attached to foreigners who arrived from the Continent at that time. Viotti, I remember, was absurdly ordered out of the country; and Ke'ly, who was a manager in the Opera-house, officially announced from the stage, that Madame Catalani and her husband Valabreque, were not objects of suspicion to the government. I was surprised at the vigor of Madame Catalani, and how little she was altered since I saw her at Derby in 1828. I paid her a compliment upon her good looks. 'Ah,' said she, 'I'm grown old and ugly.' I would not allow it. 'Why, man,' she said, 'I'm sixty-six.' She has lost none of that commanding expression which gave her such dignity on the stage. She is without a wrinkle, and appears to be no more than forty. Her breadth of chest is still remarkable; it was this which endowed her with the finest